



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

Johnny Sutton, U.S. Attorney

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 8, 2003

On the web at: www.usdoj.gov/usao/twx/index.html

Shana Jones, Special Assistant
Daryl Fields, Public Affairs Officer

(210) 384-7440
FBI – SA Rene Salinas – (210) 225-6741
Austin P.D. – (512) 974-5017

**FEDERAL GRAND JURY INDICTS 19
MEMBERS OF TEXAS SYNDICATE ON RACKETEERING CHARGES**

(AUSTIN, TEXAS) United States Attorney Johnny Sutton, Austin Police Chief Stan Knee and Federal Bureau of Investigation Acting Special Agent in Charge Al Ortiz announced today that 19 members of the Texas Syndicate (TS), a dominant prison gang in the State of Texas, have been indicted for violating the Racketeering Influence Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) and conspiring together to distribute cocaine.

In Austin, federal, state and local authorities this morning arrested three of the defendants—33-year-old **REYNADOZ PANIAGUA** (aka Ray Ray or Little Ray); 26-year-old **AMADO AGUILAR SORRIANO** (aka Maui); and, 30-year-old **ROBERT VELEZ** (aka Joker).

The other 14 defendants charged in the indictment were already in either federal or state custody. They are: 38-year-old **RANDY SALAZAR**; 31-year-old **ROBERT CRISOSTOMO** (aka “Bam Bam”); 24-year-old **CLETO SAMUEL DURAN** (aka Boy); 36-year-old **ARMANDO ESTRADA** (aka Shorty Two Forty); 41-year-old **RAMON FLORES** (aka Capone); 38-year-old **DANIEL DELEON MATA** (aka Daniel Mata-Deleon); 22-year-old **MAGADALENO MEDINA** (aka Junior); 30-year-old **VICTOR BARRERA MORONES** (aka Coco); 31-year-old **ARMANDO NAVA** (aka Mando); 25-year-old **JOSE LEONARDO POSADA**; 41-year-old **JOSE LOUIS RIVERA** (aka Big Joe); 28-year-old **PAUL RUIZ** (aka Veneno); 35-year-old **MICHAEL ANTHONY SANCHEZ** (aka 50-50); and 26-year-old **ERNEST ANDRADE ZUBIATE** (aka Neto). The identities of the other two defendants charged in this indictment remain under seal pending their arrest.

The indictment—returned yesterday and unsealed today—alleges that from the mid 1990's to the present, the defendants, as part of the criminal organization, were responsible for acts of murder, attempted murder, conspiracies to commit murder, robbery, drug trafficking, and other violent crimes. “These individuals were charged with conspiracy to violate RICO because they are members of an organized crime gang which has repeatedly demonstrated its willingness to commit murder, armed robbery, carjacking and other acts of violence in furtherance of their criminal enterprise,” stated **U.S. Attorney Johnny Sutton**.

— more —

Texas Syndicate Indictment Release
May 8, 2003
Page 2

The indictment charges the defendants with engaging in a criminal enterprise which committed four murders in the Austin area. According to the indictment, Ray Paniagua, aka "Ray Ray," shot and killed Rudy Anthony Rodela on or about January 18, 1998; defendants Magdaleno Medina, aka "Junior," and Jose Leonardo Posada shot and killed Jove Rios on or about July 2, 2000; defendants Michael Anthony Sanchez, aka "50-50," and Armando Nava, aka "Mando," shot and killed George Morales on or about July 12, 2000; and, defendant Ernest Zubiata, aka "Neto," shot and killed Alex Lopez on or about July 15, 2001.

The indictment also charges that from January 1998 to February 2003, the defendants conspired to possess with the intent to distribute more than five kilograms of cocaine. Authorities estimate that during that time period, the defendants conspired to distribute well over one hundred kilograms in the Austin area.

"Due to the cooperation and assistance among all agencies involved, these individuals—upon conviction—will face substantial federal prison sentences without parole," stated Austin Police Chief Stan Knee.

"This case is a prime example of the FBI's commitment to target and remove violent criminal organizations from our society. These criminal organizations should not underestimate our commitment to provide whatever manpower and resources it takes to bring them to justice," stated Al Ortiz, Acting Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, San Antonio Division.

In 1999, 23 Texas Syndicate gang members were convicted on federal drug conspiracy charges. This indictment is a follow up to that case. This case is the result of a two-year-long investigation conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Austin Police Department with assistance from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, U.S. Secret Service, Texas Board of Criminal Justice—Office of Inspector General, Travis County Sheriff's Office and the Texas Department of Public Safety. This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Liz Cottingham and Ron Sievert and Special Assistant United States Attorney Gregg Cox of the Travis County District Attorney's Office.

The Texas Syndicate, also known as "Syndicato Tejano" and "ESE TE," originated during the 1970's as a response by native Texas inmates to other prison gangs.

An indictment is a formal accusation of criminal conduct, not evidence. Defendants are presumed innocent unless and until convicted through due process of law.

#####

